

March 17, 2015

Re: Raised Bill #6941- An Act Concerning State Agency Interpreter
Services

Co-chairpersons Senator Moore and Representative Abercrombie, and members of the Human Services Committee:

Thank you this opportunity to write in support of Raised Bill # 6941 regarding interpreting services for State Agencies.

As an ex-State of Connecticut Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired [CDHI] Interpreter Co-coordinator. I can attest to the need and purpose of this bill. Previous to the dismantling of CDHI during previous administrations, it was common and standard practice for Connecticut state agencies to request and receive interpreting services only from CDHI. The system was effective and efficient. The system was almost seamless with close to a 99% assignment coverage rate. Consumers both Deaf and non deaf received the interpreting services they needed to encourage communication access to goods and services within Connecticut in accordance with Federal Law. Conditions within the Deaf community improved and employment numbers for Deaf persons grew within state agencies. Billings for services were handled on "Transfer Invoices" and accountability for service provision was sound. State Auditors kept CDHI fiscally in line. Agencies utilizing services became better aware of the consumer and allied with CDHI on behalf of Deaf citizens. Flexibility in service provision was enhanced. Costs for services were kept at a minimum. It worked to the benefit of all.

Returning to the system that worked so well is encouraged. Installing a protocol for State Agencies in need of interpreting services would be a wise move. Having State Agencies request services from the “State” [DoRS] first, would prove to be as “cost effective” as it had in the past. The service is significantly cheaper from DoRS than from most other brokering agents and there is sufficient interpreter quality control working with DoRS; especially when legal matters surface as in the State Courts and in DCF.

Maintaining relationships with out of state service interpreter brokering agents would insure that services are there for Deaf consumers when DoRS is unable to provide. There seems to certainly be sufficient interpreting work to go around and state agencies would be free to access those services when DoRS can’t provide.

I encourage the Human Services Committee to support Raised Bill # 6941 and restore DoRS [CDHI] as the primary State interpreting brokering resource for State Agencies.

Respectfully,

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